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# DISSERTATION

BY WAY OF  
INQUIRY INTO THE TRUE IMPORT  
AND APPLICATION OF THE VISION

Related DAN. IX. ver. 20. to the end, usually called,  
DANIEL'S PROPHECY OF SEVENTY WEEKS.

With some OCCASIONAL REMARKS on the very learned Professor  
J. D. MICHAELIS's Letters to Sir JOHN PRINGLE on the  
same Subject.

By BENJAMIN BLAYNEY, B. D.  
FELLOW of HERTFORD COLLEGE, and one of the PREACHERS  
at His MAJESTY'S CHAPEL at WHITEHALL.

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UNDERSTAND THE MATTER, AND CONSIDER THE VISION. ver. 23.

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TO  
THE HONOURABLE  
AND RIGHT REVEREND  
*SHUTE* LORD BISHOP OF *LANDAFF*,  
THIS DISSERTATION,  
DESIGNED TO ILLUSTRATE  
A CELEBRATED BUT DIFFICULT  
P R O P H E C Y  
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT,  
IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED,  
IN TESTIMONY OF THE AUTHOR'S  
MOST DUTIFUL ATTACHMENT  
AND  
MOST GRATEFUL RESPECT.

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## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE Author of the following Dissertation hath been encouraged by those, of whose judgment he hath a far better opinion than he hath of his own, to submit to the public his attempt towards the explication of a prophecy, which hath long been looked upon as very obscure and interesting; but this he could not prevail upon himself to do, without making known at the same time how his thoughts came to be turned in such a new and particular direction, and of what assistance he hath availed himself in the further prosecution of his inquiry. — My very learned and respectable friend, and predecessor in this College, now Bishop of DROMORE, to whom at his request I had sent an extract of the eight last verses of the Ninth chapter of Daniel, from the ancient version of the Seventy, lately discovered and published at Rome, most obligingly returned his acknowledgments with the following ingenious remarks. “The numbers which  
“in this version are found different from those in the  
“common text,” he thinks, “may be thus accounted for.  
“Seventy weeks add seven weeks are 539 years. Now  
“Cyrus’s decree according to all the Chronologers was  
“issued 536 years before Christ; and if we reckon by  
“hebdomads of years, we cannot come nearer to Christ’s  
“birth. Add to the sixty two years (mentioned ver. 26.  
“and



“and 27. in this Greek version) the surplus of three  
 “years in the period of seventy seven weeks, and you  
 “have the year LXV after Christ, the year immedi-  
 “ately preceding the Jewish war. This too is called  
 “Christ’s coming, Matt. xvi. 28. xxiv. 3. &c.  
 “Thus the period of weeks refers to the birth of Christ  
 “with a sufficient exactness for prophetic language;  
 “and that of years marks his coming in another sense  
 “with historical precision.” But “to make the 24th  
 “verse consistent with this interpretation,” he supposes  
 that “we ought to render instead of seventy weeks, (weeks  
 “weeks) many weeks;” by which he seems so far to  
 fall in with the common opinion, as to understand these  
 weeks not to be a distinct period, according to my notion  
 of the matter, but one and the same with those after-  
 wards mentioned en detail. He likewise adds, that  
 “לרבים ver. 27. should in his opinion be translated,  
 “to the mighty, meaning the Romans combined against  
 “Jerusalem. And he (Titus, the prince who was to  
 “come, ver. 26.) shall confirm the league to the migh-  
 “ty for one week. The war lasted seven years, and  
 “may have begun in October LXVI. (See Michaelis’s  
 “letters p. 176.) Thus the year of our Lord LXX,  
 “when the city was destroyed, and the sacrifice ceased,  
 “was the middle year of the week.” In a subsequent  
 Letter his Lordship agrees in correcting a mistake, which  
 I had observed to him, and which he had hastily made,  
 in supposing the birth of Christ to be coincident with the  
 beginning of the common Christian æra; and candidly  
 owns, that the interpretation he had offered was by no  
 means satisfactory to him, but thrown out by way of  
 trial



*trial what could be made of the new principles furnished by the newly edited version. Whether his judgment will any more approve of the superstructure, which I have ventured to build nearly upon the same principles, and in consequence of the hints originally started by him, though pursued somewhat differently, I cannot yet say; but should have accounted it a felicity to have had him nearer at hand, where I could have laid the whole plan before him, and taken the benefit of his advice, with more ease and convenience before publication — Soon after the receipt of the Bishop's first letter beforementioned, I procured Professor Michaelis's Letters to Sir John Pringle, to which I was referred by his Lordship, and read them with such attention, as the works of that excellent Critic always command. I here beg leave to profess the highest veneration and respect for his uncommon erudition and great abilities; and how widely soever I may seem to differ from him in the main as to the interpretation of this prophecy, I freely and cheerfully own myself indebted to him for a great deal of light he has thrown upon the subject by many judicious and well approved observations. I hope he will excuse the freedom I have taken of calling in question some of his opinions, which I could not possibly acquiesce in; and shall be obliged to him if he will condescend to set me right in any point, where I myself may have committed mistakes. For as the discovery of truth is the object, which both of us (if I may be allowed to rank myself in company with so great a man) have in view; so a friendly collision of differing judgments I take to be the most likely means of striking it out in the end — With respect to the various readings I have made use of, such of them as were near  
at*

*at hand I have collated myself; for the rest I am indebted to the friendship of Dr Kennicott, who kindly communicated them to me. It is with pleasure I announce to the public, that the Doctor's celebrated and elaborate work has been for some time in the press, and is now in great forwardness; and I make no doubt but that it will answer the high expectations, which have been entertained both at home and abroad of its accuracy and extensive utility — At present I imagine no apology will be thought needful for my having supposed the possibility of errors existing in the modern Hebrew text; since the prejudices, which once so unaccountably prevailed in favour of its absolute integrity, seem to be dying away apace before that conviction, which must necessarily arise from the discovery of numberless various readings in the Manuscripts and Versions of great antiquity, whereby the sense hath been improved, and the objections cut off, of which infidelity hath but too often availed itself for the disparaging of sacred Writ.*

HERT. COLL. Dec. 2. 1774.

## DISSERTATION

BY WAY OF

INQUIRY into the true import and application of the Vision related in the Ninth Chapter of *Daniel*, from ver. 20. to the end, usually called, DANIEL'S PROPHECY OF SEVENTY WEEKS.

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WE are told by St. *Peter*, that *no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation*<sup>a</sup>; by which, I think, he evidently meant, that no man whatever is of capacity to explain it at his own pleasure, but must wait till such time as the Spirit of God, the author of prophecy, shall think fit to reveal it to him. Accordingly many of the ancient Prophets themselves, we are assured, understood not the import of the things which they delivered<sup>b</sup>. Thus Daniel, ch. xii. having related the

<sup>a</sup> 2 Pet. i. 20.<sup>b</sup> 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.



particulars of an extraordinary vision, expressly declares, ver. 8. that *he heard, but understood not*; and proceeding to inquire farther of the Angel who conversed with him, he was stopped by the following reply, ver. 9. *Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.* It was not so however with the prophecy which is intended for the subject of our present inquiry; where an Angel was dispatched from heaven with a special commission *to give him skill and understanding*<sup>a</sup>, and he is with authority admonished to *understand the matter, and consider the Vision*<sup>b</sup>. It might naturally have been expected, that what was so clearly revealed to the prophet himself, would have been as intelligible to others also, who received it from him in the selfsame terms in which the Angel announced it. But the fact is otherwise; for whatever the Jews of earlier ages may have thought of the prediction, it is very certain of those who lived near the times marked out for its accomplishment, and still more so of the modern ones, that they are very much in the dark, and altogether inconsistent and wide of the truth in their attempts to explain it. Nor indeed do the Christians themselves appear much more enlightened in the matter, if we may judge from the various modes of interpretation, which at different times have been offered, and the many difficulties and doubts, with which all

<sup>a</sup> Dan. ix. 21, 22.<sup>b</sup> ver. 23.



in their turn have been respectively incumbered. It will not, I hope, be thought presumptuous or improper in me, if I attempt to throw some farther light upon the subject; and after a brief notice of the principal objections that occur to the modes of interpretation most generally received, endeavour to point out the main source of these difficulties, and to obviate them by a new method of solution, more consistent with itself, and less liable to exception than any that have preceded.

THE vision, according to the present translation of our Bibles, is represented at the 24th and following verses in these words:

v. 24. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.*

v. 25. *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

v. 26. *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people*  
A 2 *of*

*of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

v. 27. *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate.*

THE opinion most commonly entertained, among Christians at least, concerning this prophecy on the whole, is, that it is a prediction of the death of our blessed Saviour, descriptive of some of the most material circumstances, effects, and consequences of it; and that the seventy weeks, presumed to be spoken of at the beginning of the twenty fourth verse, constitute a period, which terminates in or about the time of our Saviour's suffering. Now to this interpretation one very obvious and considerable objection presents itself at once, namely, that though the commandment is said, ver. 23. to have gone forth in consequence of Daniel's supplication, very little or no regard is paid either to the occasion or subject matter of his prayer. The occasion of it is thus set forth in the beginning of the chapter; that Daniel, having considered *the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years*  
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*in the desolations of Jerusalem*, and having found that the term was near expiring, had *set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes* \*. Accordingly the substance of his prayer was, after a devout acknowledgement of God's righteousness in punishing the iniquity of his people, as he had threatened, to intreat him to extend his mercy to them likewise agreeably to his promise, to take them again into favour, and to restore them to their country, and the free exercise of their most holy religion. But what was the reply? Instead of a comfortable assurance that God would confirm his word, as indeed he was about to do, in the restoration of his people, the petitioner is informed of an event, very considerable indeed in itself, but not much to the matter of his petition; namely, that the Messiah should be put to death for the sins of mankind; and that in consequence thereof the city (of which he is told by the bye, as it were, that it should be rebuilt in the interval) should after a while be destroyed, and the Jewish nation and religion be finally put an end to. Such was the petition, and such the answer; and though I do not deny that where one thing is asked, providence may think proper to answer the petitioner with another; the presumption however, I conceive, *cæteris paribus*, will always be in favour of a reply that falls in with the subject of petition.

\* Dan. ix. 2, 3, &c.



A SECOND objection lies against the time from which the period specified in the prophecy is understood to take it's commencement. This by some has been reckoned from the seventh, by others from the twentieth year of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*; the former being the year in which Ezra was sent to regulate the affairs of Jerusalem<sup>a</sup>; the latter that in which Nehemiah obtained a commission to repair the walls of the city<sup>b</sup>. But can any better reason be assigned for fixing on either of these dates, than that they favour an hypothesis already formed, by terminating, though after a different mode of computation, in or about the time of our Saviour's passion? But if the circumstances of the case be attended to, will it not appear infinitely more probable, that the decree here spoken of must be that of *Cyrus*, of whom it had been prophesied long before by *Isaiab*, ch. XLIV. 28. that *he should say to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid*. And again in the following chapter, ver. 13. *He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts?* Is it likely then that the decree of this *Cyrus*, so long celebrated beforehand, this primary and fundamental decree, which took place exactly at the expiration of the seventy years captivity, within a few months after this prophecy was given, and produced such a total alteration at once in the con-

<sup>a</sup> Ezra vii. 1, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Neh. ii. 1, &c.



dition of the people and the face of their country ; is it likely, I say, that this decree should be overlooked, and the preference given to another at the distance of eighty or ninety years, and one of secondary consideration only, whether we consider it's importance in itself, or it's being only grafted on the former, as a subsequent ratification and confirmation of it? Certainly neither Daniel himself, when he saw the first decree issued, and the effects of it, could have any doubt whether it was that, of which he had been before apprized ; nor could the rest of his countrymen, who lived to see the other decrees that came forth in the succeeding reigns, have been at any loss to determine between them, from whence the date of their future fortunes was to be calculated.

BUT thirdly, another obvious objection arises from the supposed division of the term of seventy weeks, specified in the gross at ver. 24, into distinct and separate periods, terminating in seven weeks, sixty two weeks, and one week, of which particular mention is made in the 25th and following verses. Now this division, if made with any other end than to amuse, (an end which cannot be imputed without derogating from the wisdom of God's providence) ought, it should seem, to mark out periods naturally distinguished by some extraordinary and remarkable occurrences. But whether we reckon from the seventh, or from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, it doth not appear that  
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the fortyninth year from that date, or any one near it, was at all signalized for any notable event, either respecting the Jewish history, or the general history of mankind. It belongs therefore to those, who interpret the prophecy conformably to either of those dates, to shew that this first period of seven weeks, or forty nine years, did actually terminate in some such singular event; or otherwise at least to assign some probable reason, (which, if not before, yet after the accomplishment may very fairly be expected) why that particular period should have been pitched upon by God in preference to any other part of the interval, where a more signal termination might have proportionably contributed to a more striking display of his foresight and providence.\*

WITH respect to the remaining periods other difficulties also remain to be adjusted, but different ac-

\* Dr Prideaux in his *Script. Connect.* P. i. B. 5. hath laboured to prove, that what is said of *restoring and building Jerusalem*, v. 25. was meant figuratively of a reformation and resettlement of the Jewish Church and State according to the Law of Moses. Upon this footing indeed he hath fixed on a very plausible termination of the first period, by making this work of reformation to have lasted the whole forty nine years, having been first set on foot by Ezra, and at length completed by Nehemiah in the fortyninth year. But besides the difficulty of proving that Nehemiah's administration extended to this date, which is much disputed; the ground work of the hypothesis, which rests on the figurative sense, is very improbable, and surely ought never to be admitted in any case, where a fair and reasonable solution of the matter can be given according to the proper and literal sense.

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according to the different hypotheses which have been framed in succession, in order to get clear of the objections which embarrassed the preceding ones. The most considerable of these hypotheses with their objections respectively are as follow. There are some who calculate the second period of threescore and two weeks so as to end in or about the twentyninth year of the Christian æra, when our Lord entered upon his public ministry; and from thence proceed to compute the last week of seven years so, as that the middle of the week may coincide with the time of our Saviour's death; by which great offering of himself once for all he took away the obligation and efficacy of all future sacrifices \*. On this supposition indeed the words of the prophecy may seem to have been punctually fulfilled, *in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease*. But how then can he be said to have *confirmed the covenant*, by which the gospel covenant is understood, *with many for one week*, when

\* Petavius and Archbishop Usher have both followed this mode of computation, beginning to reckon the first period from the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which they place in the 4259th and 4260th (the one ending, the other beginning) year of the Julian Period, that is, the 455th and 454th before the Christian æra; so that adding 69 weeks, or 483 years, the sum of the two first periods taken together, we shall arrive at the 4742d or 4743d year of the Julian Period, that is, the year of our Lord xxix, or xxx, for the conclusion of the second period. See *Petavii Rationar. tempor.* P. ii. lib. iii. cap. 10. and *Usserii Annal.* Ann. P. Jul. 4260.



his ministry lasted by confession no more than the half of it. Nor will it lessen the difficulty to allege, that the same covenant continued to be promulged by his disciples after his death for the remainder of the term. It did so indeed; but not for one week only, but for many more in succession; whereas the construction of the words necessarily implies an action, of which the duration was limited to one week only.—Others again propose to finish the second period, and begin the third a little earlier, namely in the year of our Lord xxvi, when *the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness* \*. And here too the prophecy will appear to have had it's accomplishment in one part, in that during the interval of a week or seven years from this time to the year xxxiii, in which our Lord suffered, the gospel *Covenant* was indeed *confirmed*, partly by the preaching of his forerunner John the Baptist, and partly by his own personal ministry, to as *many* as were willing to comply with

\* Luk. iii. 1. 2. This is the opinion which Dr Prideaux has maintained in opposition to the preceding one. For this purpose he begins to compute the first period from the 7th year of Artaxerxes, which according to the ancient Chronologers was the 4256th of the Julian Period, or the 458th before Christ. Add 483 years to this, and we are brought to the 4739th year of the Julian Period, or the 26th of the Christian æra, which corresponds with the fifteenth year of Tiberius, reckoned from the time when he was admitted to a copartnership in the empire with Augustus, and fixed by the Evangelist for the date of John the Baptist's first public appearance. See Prideaux *Script. Connec.* P. i. B. 5.



the terms of it. But the plausibility of this hypothesis is again overturned by the words next in succession, which require also, that *in the midst of the week he should cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease*. For allowing the abovementioned construction to be put upon these words, that by the death of Christ the obligation of the legal sacrifices was *virtually* at an end, (for it is certain they did not *actually* cease till many years after) yet even upon this concession must it not sound harsh to affirm a thing to have happened *in the midst of the week*, which did not take place till the very close and expiration of it?—And besides the difficulties, which thus alternately affect each of these hypotheses, there is still another behind which is common to both. For it is not easy to conceive, how the two circumstances just now alluded to, which are predicted to happen in the course of the last week, and are thereby appropriated to the time of our Saviour's death, at least according to the opinions we are now speaking of, came to be blended with and interposed between those, which evidently relate to the destruction of the Jewish city and temple, and of course came not to pass till many years after.—Nor will the case be much improved by a third hypothesis; which assuming a series of shorter, that is, *Chaldaic* years, of 360 days each, brings down the second period only to the death of Christ; after which, admitting a considerable interval, it begins again to

reckon the last week a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem, so as finally to terminate in that catastrophe\*. By this means indeed it must be confessed,

\* This hypothesis acknowledgeth Bishop Lloyd for it's author, and is represented in the 3d and 4th of the Chronological Tables compiled and published by Mr Marshall, his Lordship's Chaplain, who hath also explained it more at large in a treatise of his own upon the subject. In it the first period is dated from the commission granted to Nehemiah in or about the month Nisan (that is, April) of the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which is taken according to the old Chronology for the 4269th of the Julian Period, answering to the 445th before the vulgar Christian æra. From this date if we reckon seven weeks and threescore and two weeks of, that is, in all 483, Chaldaic years, which are equivalent to 476 Julian years, and some days over, the second period will end in the 4745th year of the Julian Period, or the year of our Lord xxxii, and about the month of May, or not long after; at the passover next after which, within the space of a year, our Saviour was crucified. The third and last period of a single week, or seven years, is made to commence about September in the year of our Lord lxi, when the Romans made a treaty of peace with the Parthians and others; and Jerusalem was taken in September of the year of our Lord lxx. Besides the objection to this hypothesis noticed in the text, two others deserve remarking; the one, that though a pretty plain distinction seems to be made between the time of the Messiah's appearance, v. 25. and *the cutting off*, which is said to be *after the threescore and two weeks*, v. 26. yet in this hypothesis both are confounded together, as if *unto the Messiah the Prince*, and to his death, meant the same thing. The other objection is the same that occurs to the preceding hypothesis, namely, that *the cessation of the sacrifice and oblation*, which is here understood of the *actual* cessation of them, did not take place till toward the extremity of the last or seventh year; whereas it was predicted to happen *in the midst*, or, if you please, *the half of the week*. See what is farther said upon this point hereafter when we come to examine this paragraph, ver. 26.

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that both *the confirmation of the covenant with many for one week*, and *the abolition of the sacrifices in the midst of that week*, may with a much greater degree of plausibility be reconciled and accounted for. But not to insist on the several objections that occur in other particulars, the breaking of the line of time, on which the whole stress of this hypothesis lies, must of itself appear in the highest degree exceptionable. For either the limitation of a number of years in a prediction supposes those years to follow in continued succession, or it is in effect no limitation at all, nor of any use to ascertain the precise time of the event. On the contrary, how easily may the very same date be accommodated to the most distant periods imaginable, provided it be allowable to discontinue the reckoning at pleasure, and to resume it again, just where it may suit the turn of a fancied hypothesis? So that whoever considers the difficulties that present themselves at every turning, and what contradictions have resulted even on the footing of the fairest conjectures that have hitherto been started, will see reason enough to conclude, that all those conjectures have as yet fallen at a distance from the truth, whatever may have been the occasion and ground of the error. To discover and remove this is the object at present proposed, by a careful and candid examination of the matter in the order it lies before us.

To



To begin then with the 24th verse.

ver. 24. שבעים שבועים נחתך על עמך ועל עיר  
קדשך לכלא הפשע ולהתם חטאות ולכפר עון ולהביא  
צדק עלמים ולחתם חזון ונביא ולמשח קדש קדשים :

*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.*

THE two first words of this verse, which are generally understood to signify *seventy weeks*, are literally the same, being distinguished only by the points or vowels, which are additions without authority. And as they are both uniformly written without the *Vau*\*, they may with as much propriety be rendered *seventy seventy*, if the context admit of it; the repetition of the same word being often used emphatically †.

THE next word נחתך, though usually taken for a verb, cannot possibly be so without violating a primary

\* It must not be concealed, that in some few MSS. the first word is written with the *Vau*, שבועים.

† In one MS. the word שבעים is not repeated, but is found only once.

rule of grammar, in making a singular verb to agree with a nominative plural. Besides, the sense which is given to it, namely, *fated* or *determined*, seems to be arbitrary, and authorized only by a supposed *exigentia loci*. The word itself occurs no where else throughout the Bible; and as for it's supposed root חתך, it is very doubtful whether such a one ever existed in the Hebrew language. The Greek version of *Theodotion*, the Vulgate, and the *Arabic*, versions seem almost as arbitrary in rendering the word, *hastened*, *abbreviated*, *cut short*. The *Syriac* indeed gives a quite different signification, *shall rest*, thereby referring it to the verb נוח, which signifies *to rest*; from which etymology a more probable conclusion may be drawn. For if instead of a verb we suppose it to be a noun formed from נחתך, *thy rest*, or perhaps a corruption of the word נחת, *rest*, it will then be found to be a term synonymous with שבת, *sabbath*, which is used to signify the CESSATION or REST of a country, whilst it continues in a state of desolation. Thus, Lev. XXVI. 34, 35. it is said, *Then shall the land enjoy her SABBATHS, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land REST, and enjoy her SABBATHS; as long as it lieth desolate, it shall REST.* And again, ver. 43. *The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her SABBATHS, while she lieth desolate without them.* And 2 Chro. XXXVI. 21. the idea is brought home, and immediately applied to the desolation brought upon Jerusalem by the King of Babylon,

lon, which is there said *to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her SABBATHS ; for as long as she lay desolate, she kept SABBATH, to fulfil threescore and ten years.* Here then we are furnished with a noun, which following the numeral adjective is, according to the strictest rules of Hebrew grammar, in the singular number ; and since the verb substantive is understood, we are at liberty to supply it in such tense as the context requires. Instead therefore of reading, *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city,* I propose to read, *Seventy, I say, seventy years of rest (or, desolation) have been upon thy people and upon thy holy city.* To confirm this interpretation, let us examine whether the subsequent members of the verse have an apt consistency with it.

AND first, The words **לכלא הפשע**, which our Translators have rendered, *to finish the transgression*\*, more properly signify, *to check or restrain the revolt ;* for **פשע** is not a generic term for every transgression, but marks that particular species, which consists in withdrawing the allegiance that is due to a lawful Sovereign. Now God being king in Israel, the idola-

\* The greater part of the collated MSS. read with the printed Copies **לכלא**, but in 16 MSS. the reading is **לכלה**, which is more agreeable to the principal ancient versions, as well as to our English one. Upon the whole however, though the sense would not be very different either way, the reading of the printed Copies seems preferable.



trous worship of other gods, so frequently practised by that people before the captivity, and for which they were repeatedly threatened with that calamity, was no other than downright rebellion and revolt from the majesty of him, whose throne was in the heavens. But after the return of the Jews from Babylon, we do not find that they ever again relapsed into their former idolatrous courses. So that thus far the seventy years desolation might properly be said to have been designed for the *curbing* and *checking of that revolt*, since the end, we see, was so effectually answered by it.

THE next words, *לְהַחֲמֵם חַטֹּאתֵי*, in which our present English version has adopted the Masoretic emendation, confirmed by the authority of many ancient Manuscripts, and of several of the old versions, rendering them, *and to make an end of sins*\*; toge-

\* Our old English version follows the reading as it now stands in the printed Copies, *וּלְהַחֲמֵם חַטֹּאתֵי*, and renders, *and to seale up the sinnes*, which it thus paraphrases in the margin, *to shew mercie, and to put sin out of remembrance*; in which sense the seal should, methinks, be put either to the deed or instrument of pardon, or to the mouth of the accuser. Others by *sealing up sins* understand quite differently, to keep them up and reserve them for future judgment; which is the sense in which the beforementioned version paraphrases the same expression, Job xiv. 17. *Mine iniquitie is sealed up as in a bagge*—that is, says the Margin, *Thou layest them all together, and suffrest none of my sinnes unpunished*. Neither of these senses do so well accord with the context as the Masoretic reading, *וּלְהַחֲמֵם*, which there is other good reason also to believe the true original one, changed by an easy mistake for *וּלְהַחֲמֵם*,

ther with the subsequent words, **ולכפר עון**, *and to expiate or make atonement for iniquity*; and those immediately following, **ולהביא צדק עלמים**, which literally and properly signify, *and to bring again the righteousness of ancient times*, meaning that piety and innocence of manners, which used formerly to prevail and distinguish at least the patriarchal ages; all these three sentences, thus linked together, do so perfectly correspond with the design of every wise and good governor in inflicting punishment, that no argument seems necessary to justify their application to that severe but wholesome discipline, with which God had been pleased to visit and chastise his chosen people in the temporary desolation of their country.

IN the words which follow, **ולחתם חזון ונביא**, our translators have chosen to follow the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and render them, *and to seal up the vision and prophecy*, in preference to the printed Hebrew text, which exhibits **ונביא**, *and prophet*, and herein has the concurrence of the greater part of, if not all, the collated MSS\*, together with the Greek versions of the Seventy and Theodotion. It is possible that those, who first adopted the word *prophecy*, might

which word follows presently after in the same verse, and perhaps might have caught the transcriber's eye by standing immediately under the former. N. B. **ולחתם** is found in 40 MSS. and **חטאות** for **חטאות** in 70 MSS.

\* In one MS. the *Vau* is omitted before **נביא**, and in another it is **הנביא**; but no authority occurs for reading **ונבואה**, *and prophecy*.

attend

attend only to the primary and most obvious use of a seal, that of closing up a letter or writing, in order to keep the contents of it secret for a time; and this they might the rather be disposed to do, 'as the image is manifestly thus applied to a *vision* or *prophecy* twice in the twelfth chapter at the 4th and 9th verses. Since therefore there was no accommodating a seal in this sense to *the prophet* himself, they might think themselves justified, by the necessity of the case in correcting a supposed error by substituting the thing instead of the person. But by the annexing of a seal another purpose, we know, is likewise answered, namely, that of authenticating the deed or instrument to which it is affixed. And thus the seventy years desolation, being the accomplishment of what had been predicted by the prophet Jeremiah concerning Judah and Jerusalem, served not only to seal or attest the truth of the prophecy itself, but also to ascertain the sacred character of the prophet, who uttered it in the name of the Lord\*.

I COME now to the last member of the verse, *ולמשה קדש קדשים*, and to *anoint the most holy*, or *holy of holies*; by which it is usual to understand the

\* Thus Christ is said to have been *sealed by God the father*, when by the miracles which he wrought his divine mission was fully authenticated; John vi. 27. and thus Christians were *sealed by having the earnest of the spirit given them in their hearts*, attesting and shewing to whom they belonged. 2 Cor. i. 22.



consecrating of the Messiah, that is, the Christ, or anointed, to his sacred office. But how plausible soever this may appear, when the words are taken by themselves, they cannot be so understood, when applied to the context, unless it be made appear that Christ was actually consecrated to, or entered upon, his office within the time specified. But that is impossible, even upon the most favourable supposition of seventy weeks of prosperity, instead of so many years of desolation, without assuming an arbitrary and improbable date to begin from. But the words קדש קדשים are, I believe, constantly applied in the old testament not to persons, but to things, to the temple or sanctuary itself, the altar, vessels, and utensils belonging to the temple, together with the offerings, and other appurtenances of the temple worship; and it was by the ceremony of anointing that these things were directed to be cleansed and sanctified<sup>a</sup>, so as to be fitted to appear in the presence of that pure and holy Being, to whom this worship was directed. On the other hand we are likewise told, that by the sins and transgressions of the people, and particularly by their idolatries, all these things were polluted and made common<sup>a</sup>, and instead of remaining most holy unto the Lord, were rendered abominable and offensive in his sight<sup>b</sup>. If therefore the punishment inflicted on the Jews proved the means of recovering

<sup>a</sup> Exod. xxx. 25—29.

<sup>c</sup> Prov. xv. 8. Lam. ii. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Ezek. xxiii. 38, 39.

them

them from their backslidings and idolatry, of expiating their iniquity, and working in them a thorough reformation and amendment, it would of course be a means of restoring them to the divine favour, and consequently would render both the place and instruments of their worship once more acceptable unto God, by cleansing them from the defilements they had before contracted. And this therefore might justly be stiled in metaphorical language, which is the language of prophecy, an *anointing*, or sanctifying anew, *of their most holy things*.

BEFORE we proceed farther, let us recapitulate what has been said, and close our observations upon this verse. By the interpretation here offered we find one of the principal objections obviated, which lay to former solutions; for we have now a reply directly to the matter and occasion of the prophet Daniel's prayer. It was no other than the seventy years desolation, as foretold by Jeremiah, which had exercised his thoughts, and put him upon making his address to God. He had acknowledged the manifold and great provocations of his countrymen, and pathetically described and lamented the miseries that had ensued; intreating the Lord at length to turn from the fierceness of his wrath, to pardon and restore again to favour his once loved people, and to repair the breaches that had been made in his sanctuary, and in the city that was called by his holy name.

name. His prayer was heard; and the Angel was commissioned to shew him, that the late judgments, which had befallen his people, were not intended for their final destruction, but as a merciful visitation to correct their enormities, and to bring about the salutary purposes of reformation; consequently, when the time destined for these purposes should be completed, and they should be made sensible of the hand of God by the full accomplishment of his predictions, they would then find themselves again reinstated in his favour, and in the free exercise of their most holy religion. What could be more apposite than this?—Nor is there the least force put either upon the terms, or upon their grammatical construction, to make them speak such a sense: the whole is easy and natural. I shall therefore take leave to read the 24th verse according to the following literal translation; *Seventy, I say, seventy years of rest (or desolation) have been upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to check the revolt, and to put an end to sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring again the righteousness of ancient times, and to seal (i. e. authenticate) the divine oracle, and the prophet, (who delivered it) and to anoint (i. e. sanctify anew) the most holy things.*

I PROCEED now to consider the 25th verse, wherein I think we shall see pointed out the entire period, in which the Jews continued to enjoy, without any considerable interruption at least, the privileges they  
were



were restored to upon the expiration of their captivity, together with the most interesting occurrences of that period.

ver. 25. וְהָרַע וְתִשְׁכַּל מִן מִצָּה דָּבָר לְהָשִׁיב וּלְבָנוֹת  
 יְרוּשָׁלַם עַד מִשִּׁיחַ נָגִיד שִׁבְעִים שָׁבָעָה וּשְׁבַעִים שָׁנִים  
 וּשְׁנִים תֵּשׁוּב וּנְבִנְתָה רְחוֹב וְחֲרוּץ וּבְצוֹק הָעֵתִים :

*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

THE Angel having accounted, as we have already seen, for the events that were past, begins now to foretel future ones after the following manner; *And thou shalt know and understand, that from the going forth of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem*—Thus far with respect to the translation I apprehend there will be little or no controversy; for though some of the Greek versions exhibit a different sense of the words לְהָשִׁיב וּלְבָנוֹת, which are here rendered, *to rebuild*, no man who is at all versed in Hebrew will deny, that by the idiom of that language the verb שׁוּב, in construction with another verb, denotes a repetition of the action expressed by the latter verb. Accordingly our translators, who in the text had closely followed the  
 Hebrew

Hebrew idiom, and rendered, *to restore and to build*, have in the margin given a more liberal turn to the phrase, viz. *to build again*; and presently after in this same verse have done the like in the text itself, where what we read, *the street shall be built again*, is in the original, תשוב ונבנתה, *shall return and be built*. But the point most likely to be contested is, what decree or commandment is here designed. I shall not now repeat what has been before urged against the probability of any decree posterior to that of Cyrus\*, or in favour of taking the date of that decree for the æra, from whence to compute the following times. I shall only observe, that by the interpretation just now proposed of the 24th verse the latter hypothesis is almost reduced to a certainty. For granting that in the preceding verse the seventy years desolation was the subject spoken of, upon that footing at least it can scarcely be imagined, that by *the decree*, specified in the words immediately following to be a decree *for rebuilding Jerusalem*, any other could be intended than the edict of Cyrus, which, as we are told Ezra i. 1. was issued for this very purpose, *that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah*, who foretold both the desolation itself, and the time of it's termination, *might be fulfilled* \*.

\* P. 6, 7.

\* The learned Professor Michaelis (*Epist. ad D. I. Pringle*, p. 94.) supposes the decree here spoken of to be no other than the prophecy itself, which had just proceeded from the mouth of God. On this

The words עַר מִשִּׁיחַ נָגִיד, which come next in order, are, I think, both rightly translated, *unto the Messiah*

supposition indeed the difference in point of time would be but inconsiderable, as the prophecy preceded the decree of Cyrus but a few months only. But the argument brought in support of this opinion appears not sufficiently conclusive. He observes that at ver. 23. we read, יָצָא דָּבָר, *the commandment came forth*; from whence he infers the necessity of understanding מָצָא דָּבָר, *the going forth of the commandment, or decree*, as we render it, ver. 25. to refer precisely to the same thing. Now though it be a very good rule in the general, whereby to judge of the doubtful sense of a term or phrase, to compare it with the use of the same term or phrase by the same author, and especially in the neighbouring context, yet it is a rule that will not always hold good. In the 25th verse the commandment is particularly specified to be *for the rebuilding of Jerusalem*; but the commandment before spoken of at the 23d verse cannot possibly be so understood. There it is said, *at the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth*; but if this be God's commandment for rebuilding Jerusalem, we must conclude this to have been the first time of his notifying any such purpose. And so indeed our Author seems to suppose, when he says, "precari incipiente Daniele, statim Deus illa verba, quæ versu 24 — 27 legimus, in cœlo pronuntiat, ac tanquam ex fatorum libris recitat." (*Epist. ut supra* p. 29.) But the fact is otherwise; for God had before notified that purpose by Isaiah, as we have already seen, and expressly named Cyrus for the execution of it. Isai. XLiv. 28. XLV. 13. — If it be asked, To what then do I suppose the commandment v. 23. to refer, I answer, that with the generality of interpreters I understand no other by it, than a commission given by God to the angel to go and shew Daniel all the following particulars, as a mark of God's special favour; and this I conceive to be the most natural import of the words taken together, *At the beginning of thy supplications an order came forth, in pursuance of which I am come to shew thee, because thou art greatly beloved of God; therefore attend to the order, and consider the vision, or revelation*; that is, "understand by whose

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*the prince*, and also rightly referred to the coming of our Saviour; than which no event can possibly be conceived more important and interesting to the Jewish nation in general, whether we understand his first coming to preach to them the gospel of his kingdom, or his second coming to punish their ingratitude and infidelity. Both perhaps may be found to come within

“ authority I come, and consider the import of what is now revealed to thee.” But it is objected, p. 30. that in the narrative not a word is said of any such order; on the contrary the angel pretends to come of his own accord, and from his own particular regard for Daniel. As to the first part of the objection, I reply, that when St Luke relates the appearance of the same angel to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, ch. i. 11, the Evangelist in his own person says no more, than that *the angel appeared to Zacharias*. But does this imply that he was not sent? If it does, we must disbelieve the angel himself, who says afterwards, nearly as he is supposed to do here, *I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.* ver. 19. And as to the notion that Gabriel pretends to come purely out of friendship and of his own accord, I marvel much whence this can be collected. For whatever idea the Scriptures may give us of the benevolence of the holy angels, they no where, I think, encourage a belief, that these blessed Spirits ever interfere in human affairs without the Almighty’s bidding; but they are simply represented as the Ministers of his providence, employed on his behalf, and always attentive to perform his will. Can it then be supposed, that one of the most immediate attendants on the divine presence would rashly desert his post, in order to carry an officious piece of intelligence to one upon earth, for which he had no authority or direction from his Superior? — Upon the whole then, the commandment v. 23. does not appear to be a commandment for *re-building Jerusalem*, and consequently cannot be the same with that which is expressly determined so to be ver. 25; so that the argument for concluding both to be the same from the similarity of expression, and both to intend the prophecy now before us, of course falls to the ground.

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the intention of this prophecy, when we examine the distinct periods which are noted by the numbers that follow. At present let it suffice to observe, that the titles here made use of are exactly of the same import with those given, probably by the same angel \*, to our Saviour in notifying his birth to the Shepherds. *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is CHRIST THE LORD* <sup>a</sup>. His apostles likewise speak of him in the same terms in their first preaching to the Jews after his resurrection. *God, say they, hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST* <sup>b</sup>. And again, *Him hath God exalted to be a PRINCE and a Saviour* <sup>c</sup>. The reason of these titles is so very obvious, and both the nature of Christ's office, and the authority of his kingdom, are so largely set forth in Scripture, that it would be needless to dwell longer on the subject †.

\* The name of the angel who appeared to the Shepherds is not mentioned, Luk. ii. 9. but as the angel who was sent to Zacharias, and to the Virgin Mary, was Gabriel, Luk. i. 19, 26. it is probable that the same was employed on this errand also.

<sup>a</sup> Luk. ii. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Acts ii. 36.

<sup>c</sup> Acts V. 31.

† M. Michaelis here conjectures the true reading to have been, *עוֹשֵׂה מְשִׁיחַ וְנָגִיד*, unto the Messiah AND the Prince, or General, meaning by the latter the Roman General Titus. *Epist. ad D. J. Pringle*, p. 81. But no such reading is countenanced by any of the ancient versions, or by the collated MSS. Nor do I think the learned Critic himself would have entertained any such notion, had he not been misled by the wrong construction adopted in the 26th verse, where *מְשִׁיחַ* and *נָגִיד* seem to be opposed, but are not, as will be shewn in its proper place. Besides, with submission to the Professor's judgment, may it not appear an improper violation of the

I come now to the confideration of that part of the prophecy, which is of the utmoſt nicety and importance in itſelf, and at the ſame time appears moſt intricate and difficult; namely, to ſettle the precise numbers here made uſe of, and to adjust the periods which are determined by them. It hath already been noticed in part, what hard ſhifts they have been reduced to, and what inextricable difficulties they have at laſt found themſelves involved in, who following the Hebrew text, as it ſtands at preſent in the printed copies, fixed and determined by the Maſoretic vowels, have ſought to accommodate the ſeveral periods to any ſeries of events, which with the leaſt degree of probability could be made to correſpond with the terms and general ſcope of the prediction\*. It would be endleſs to enumerate all the ſeveral hypotheſes; the moſt probable ones have been before touched upon; but let it ſuffice to ſay in the general, that none has yet been offered, in which a mind, no way given to ſcepticiſm, but only prudently and properly confiderate, can acquieſce with a ſober and wellgrounded conviction. This, I think, may fairly lead one to ſuſpect, that the preſent reading of the Hebrew copies is not ſuch as it ſhould be, but hath either ſuffered by the miſtakes of

laws of decorum, to have aſſociated together in ſuch a manner, as of equal rank, two perſons, one of whom was confeſſedly of a character infinitely ſuperior to the greateſt earthly monarch?

\* P. 9 — 13.

transcribers



transcribers, who have erred in nothing more than in copying numerals; or else that it hath been corrupted by the ignorance of those, who have added the vowels injudiciously, and, I doubt, have in some instances been guilty of an encroachment upon the letters themselves, where a small alteration tallied better with their prejudices and prepossessions. Certain it is, that the ground of suspicion in the present case is much confirmed by a view of the different numbers, that are actually found in some of the ancient versions and citations of authors, and also in the Hebrew Manuscripts themselves, which have of late been collated. In the present Hebrew printed copies we read, **שבעים ושנים** shall be *weeks seven and weeks threescore and two*. But in the Greek version of Daniel by the *Seventy*, lately published from an ancient Manuscript, long sought after, and at length happily discovered in the *Chigian Library at Rome* \*, (in which, though there appears much mangling, interpolation, and transposition, some valuable readings have been preserved) the numbers are repeatedly given in two places of this passage, *επτα και εβδομηκοντα και εξηκοντα δυο, seven and seventy, and sixty two*; and in one of the places we find *καιρις, times*, added to the numbers seven and seventy, and *ετων, years*, to the numbers sixty two. These numbers I apprehend to be according to

\* The Greek version of the book of *Daniel*, heretofore in use, appears to have been not that of the *LXX*, but of *Theodotion*.

the true and original reading; and we may trace the vestiges of them even in the Hebrew printed copy itself, neglecting the vowels only, and allowing a very small and easy variation. For prefixing the single letter ו to ששים, (for which we have also the authority of one of the oldest and most valuable Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library \*) we may then read שבעים ושנים, and the literal translation will be, *weeks seven and seventy, and threescore and two*. Here we may observe, that to the numbers *threescore and two* no substantive at all is added to express the thing numbered; it remains indeterminate therefore whether *weeks*, or *years*, or any other limitation of time, should be supplied. Nor would there be any thing absurd in supposing that it was designedly left thus indefinite, in order to keep up in some degree the enigmatical nature of a prophetic prediction. But in the very same Manuscript already mentioned we find the word שנה itself, which is wanting to express *years*, not indeed in its proper place, but transposed and substituted instead of שבעה *seven*; which, though certainly wrong as it stands at present, affords a strong presumption at least that it once had a place in the neighbourhood — Compare the numbers thus restored and determined with the historical dates according to the received chronology, and you will see an accomplish-

\* Heb. MS. BODLEIAN. catalogued *Laud. A. 162*. presumed to be not less than 800 years old.

ment of the prophecy to an astonishing degree of exactness. For reckoning seventy seven weeks, or 539 years, from the date of Cyrus's decree, which is allowed to have taken place in the 536th year before the vulgar Christian Æra, we shall come to the fourth year of that Æra; and consequently the birth of Christ, the first coming of the Messiah, which by the learned is now pretty generally agreed to have been in the third or fourth year before the commencement of that Æra, will fall within the course of the seventy seventh week \*.

\* Cyrus's decree is generally allowed to have been issued in the year of the Julian Period 4178; and though it be not said in what month, we may fairly presume it to have been in the beginning of that year. For in the seventh month (*October*) the Israelites, being already settled in their respective cities, assembled at Jerusalem, and kept the feast of tabernacles, Ezra iii. 1—6. Now if we allow the necessary time for making the decree known to all the Jews dispersed throughout the Persian dominions, for their preparations for the journey, for the journey itself, (which cost Ezra not less than four months, though his company was small in comparison, Ezra vii. 9.) and lastly, for the settling of them in their cities, before they could conveniently come to Jerusalem, we shall hardly think eight months more than sufficient for all this business. Granting therefore that the decree came forth in the beginning of the year 4178, and adding 76 weeks, or 532 years, the 76th week will be complete at the beginning of the year 4710. — Now if the time of Herod's death could be fixed, it would be a means of ascertaining pretty nearly the date of Christ's birth, which certainly preceded that event, but not many months, as I am inclined to think for reasons, which may be collected from comparing Matt. ii. with Luk. ii. 39. But Herod's death happened a little before the passover in the year of Rome 750 or 751, (See *Lardner's Credibility*, *append. p. 569.*) that is, according to *Varro*, in the year 4711, or 4712, of the Julian Period. If therefore we suppose our Saviour to have been born in the September preceding, (which is a much

And



And further, if the full period of seventy seven weeks be lengthened onward by the addition of threescore and two years, we shall then arrive at the sixty sixth year of the Christian Æra, the very year of the breaking out of the Jewish war, which our Saviour himself frequently points out for the time of his second Coming<sup>a</sup>. So precisely and literally beyond conception was this prediction verified in a divided, as well as in a compounded, sense, that *from the going forth of a commandment, or decree, to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, should be seventy and seven weeks, and threescore and two years* \*.

more likely season than the 25th of December) his coming in both cases will fall within the 77th week, either in the first, or in the second year of it; which is abundantly sufficient to answer the prediction; it being according to common usage in general computations, to consider *a day, a week, or a year*, as complete with respect to an action, which took up any part of it. Thus Deut. xiv. 28. *At the end of, or after three years*, is expressed ch. xxvi. 12. *in the third year*. And when Rehoboam, 2 Chron. x. 5. ordered the people to come again to him *after three days*, it is said, v. 12. that *they came on the third day, as the king bade*. And not to multiply instances, our Lord's predictions concerning himself, that *after three days he should rise again*, Mark viii. 31. and that *the Son of man should be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*, Matt. xii. 40. are in this manner understood to be fulfilled by his rising on the third morning, although it is manifest he lay in the grave but a very small part of the first and last days.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xvi. 28. xxiv. 3.

\* A very learned Friend, who was early made acquainted with the proposal of accounting for the seventy seven weeks and threescore and two years, as stated in the preface, was staggered with the objection that arose from transferring the surplus of years in the 77th week to the following

BUT

BUT before I advance farther, I must be allowed to take notice of an argument urged by a very able and learned critical writer \*, because it seems not altogether without its weight; although the conclusion I mean to deduce from it will be somewhat different from that which the author intended. The argument is founded on a celebrated passage in Josephus's history of the Jewish war, in which that historian observes, that what chiefly animated his countrymen to take up arms, was their dependence on an ambiguous oracle found in their sacred writings, that ABOUT THAT TIME *some one from their country should rule over the world.* "This," says Josephus, "they understood as appropriated to themselves, and many of the wise men were mistaken in their judgment concerning it. But what the oracle pointed out was the sovereignty of Vespasian, who was proclaimed Emperor in Judea." †

period. An objection which would equally have weighed with me perhaps, had the time been computed from the going forth of the decree unto the birth of the Messiah seventy seven weeks, and from the birth of the Messiah unto his second coming threescore and two years. But the form of the expression leads us to compute the two advents, not the latter from the former, but both alike from the going forth of Cyrus's decree; so that allowing from that decree to the first coming of Christ to be seventy seven weeks, yet it is also said, that from that decree to the second coming should be seventy seven weeks and threescore and two years, that is, in all six hundred and one years.

\* *Michaelis Epist. ad D. Joan. Pringle* fo. 105, &c.

† Lib. vi. c. 5. §. 4. Το δὲ ἐπ' αὐτῶν μάλιστα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον, ἣν

The same observation is made likewise by the heathen historians Suetonius † and Tacitus ‡. Upon this our learned author reasons in the following manner; 1. That since the oracle spoken of was one that marked out a certain determinate time, it could be no other than this prophecy of Daniel, because though there were others in the sacred writings which foretold of the Messiah, there was none but this that pretended to assign the precise time of his coming. 2. That the oracle, which drew the Jews into rebellion, and was so egregiously mistaken by their wise men, was the same which that historian applied to the Emperor Vespasian. And therefore, 3. That the time mentioned in the prophecy must have appeared to coincide with the times of the Jewish war, and of Vespasian's ex-

χρησμοῦ ἀμφιβολος ὁμοίως ἐν τῇς ἱεροῖς εὐρημένους χαρμῶσιν, "ὡς ΚΑΤΑ  
"ΤΟΝ ΚΑΙΡΟΝ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΝ, ἀπο τῆς χώρας τῆς αὐτῶν ἀρξεί τῆς οἰκουμένης."  
τέτοιοι μὲν ὡς οἰκεῖον ἐξελάβον, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν σοφῶν ἐπλανήθησαν ὡς τῶν  
κρίσιν. ἐδήλῃ δ' ἀρὰ περὶ τῶν Οὐεσπασιανῶν τοῦ λόγου ἡρμηνείαν, ἀποδοτέον  
ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίας αυτοκράτορι.

† Suetonius de Vita Vespasiani, cap. iv. Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus & constans opinio, esse in fati, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. Id de Imperatore Romano quantum eventu postea prædictum paruit. Judæi ad se trahentes, rebellant.

‡ Tacitus Hist. lib. v. c. 13. Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur. Quæ ambages Vespasianum ac Titum prædixerant. Sed vulgus, more humanæ cupidinis, sibi tantam factorum magnitudinem interpretati, ne adversis quidem ad vera mutabantur.



altation to the imperial dignity. But it was impossible, our author thinks, that not the vulgar only, but even the learned among the Jews, and Josephus himself, a man eminently skilled in chronology, could have so far miscalculated the time, as they must have done according to every supposition, if they had found seventy weeks only in their sacred copies, as we read at present. And thus far in all probability his reasoning may hold. But when he proceeds to infer, (as indeed, to do him justice, he only does by a very modest insinuation) that Josephus certainly followed the reading and mode of computation, which he himself has adopted, the conclusion, I doubt, is more than the premises will warrant. For, I think, it appears from what I have before advanced, taking no greater liberties in reforming the text than this Gentleman himself has done, and which, I trust, are no more than the laws of criticism will warrant, that both Josephus and his countrymen might otherwise have been justified in their expectations from this prophecy, in following the commonly received computation of time, which is far less liable to exception than that of lunar years, which he has imagined. For from the very nature of the Jewish establishment it is abundantly evident, that though they might have reckoned a year or two together, as consisting of twelve lunar months, they never did nor could have carried on the same kind of reckoning for any long continued series of years in

The same observation is made likewise by the heathen historians Suetonius † and Tacitus ‡. Upon this our learned author reasons in the following manner; 1. That since the oracle spoken of was one that marked out a certain determinate time, it could be no other than this prophecy of Daniel, because though there were others in the sacred writings which foretold of the Messiah, there was none but this that pretended to assign the precise time of his coming. 2. That the oracle, which drew the Jews into rebellion, and was so egregiously mistaken by their wise men, was the same which that historian applied to the Emperor Vespasian. And therefore, 3. That the time mentioned in the prophecy must have appeared to coincide with the times of the Jewish war, and of Vespasian's ex-

χρησμοῦ ἀμφιβολος ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὐρημένους γραμμασιν, "ὡς ΚΑΤΑ  
"ΤΟΝ ΚΑΙΡΟΝ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΝ, ἀπο τῆς χώρας τῆς αὐτῶν ἀρξεί τῆς οἰκουμένης."  
τὸ τοῖς μὲν ὡς οἰκεῖον ἐξελάβον, καὶ πολλὰ τῶν σοφῶν ἐπλανήθησαν περὶ τῆς  
κρίσεως. ἐδήλῃ δ' ἄρα περὶ τῆς Οὐεσπασιανῆς τοῦ λαοῦ ἡγεμονίαν, ἀποδείχθηναι  
ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίας αυτοκράτορος.

† Suetonius de Vita Vespasiani, cap. iv. Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus & constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. Id de Imperatore Romano quantum eventu postea prædictum paruit. Judæi ad se trahentes, rebellaverunt.

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succession \* — But whatever force there may be in this author's argument, it will undoubtedly extend a great

\* A Lunar year consisting of twelve Lunar months, or 354 days, falls short of the astronomical Solar year, with which the seasons return, by about eleven days. Consequently with those who compute their time by such lunar years, the beginning of their year must make a very quick circuit through all the different seasons successively. But among the Jews the beginning of their year was by the Mosaic constitutions necessarily determined to one particular season. The Month *Abib*, or *Nisan*, in which they came out of Egypt, was ordained to be unto them *the beginning of months, the first month of the year*; Exod. xii. 2. On the fourteenth day of this month the Paschal lamb was to be killed, ver. 6. the fifteenth was the first of the days of unleavened bread, and was kept as a sabbath, or day of holy rest, in which no servile work was to be done; Lev. xxiii. 6, 7. and on the morrow after this sabbath, *τη δευτερα των αζυμων* *μαζαζ, εκτη δ' εστιν η δευτερα*, says *Josephus*, *Ant. Jud.* lib. iii. c. 10. §. 5. they were directed to bring a sheaf of the first fruits for a wave offering before the Lord, to be accepted for them. This was the beginning of their barley harvest, the day in which they first *put the sickle to their corn*; nor were they at liberty to taste of the fruits of their ground, *neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until they had brought this offering unto their God*. Lev. xxiii. 10 — 14. From this time they were required to number seven complete weeks, and on the fiftieth day to offer a new meat offering unto the Lord of *the first fruits of their wheat harvest*. Lev. xxiii. 15, &c. Exod. xxxiv. 22. Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month they were commanded to observe *the feast of tabernacles*, otherwise called *the feast of ingathering, after that they had gathered in their corn and their wine*. Compare Lev. xxiii. 39. Exod. xxiii. 16. Deut. xvi. 13. Now it is obvious that these ordinances could not have been observed but seldom at their appointed times; had the beginning of the Jewish year been as variable with respect to the seasons, as a course of lunar years would make it. For in about sixteen such years each season would be changed for it's opposite; autumn would be step into the place of spring; and the month *Abib*, instead of being the month of *green ears*, as the name imports, would fall in after all the fruits were already housed in the  
deal

deal farther than he has carried it. For it is very certain, that the expectations of the coming of the Messiah

barns. It is true, that in order to begin the year uniformly with the first day of the moon, the Jews gave the name of a year sometimes to twelve lunar months, and that for two years successively; in like manner as we for a similar reason reckon three years together of 365 days each, reserving the exceeding hours, as they did the days, to be accounted for in an after-reckoning. Accordingly the third year was sure to be with them a kind of Leap year, by the intercalation of an additional month, which they called *Ve-adar*; and thus, by repeated intercalations duly made, their reckoning in the long run was brought to correspond pretty nearly with Solar Computation, and the beginning of their year to fall in much about the same season, and at no great distance from the vernal equinox; *ἐν κριφ τὴν ἡλίῳ καὶ ἀδισκῶτος*, as Josephus testifies, *Ant. Jud.* lib. iii. c. 10. §. 5. Things being so, with what propriety can it be supposed that a series of lunar years was here predicted, when it is manifest that the Jews had not, and probably no other nation then on earth had, any such reckoning in use? Or must it not appear a very fallacious mode of proceeding, to make use of a term in a sense different from the common acceptance of it, without giving previous and distinct notice of such a design? Our learned advocate for these abbreviated lunar years (which others indeed before him had imagined) is well aware of all that can be said against them, and ingenuously owns, that at first sight it seems more natural to conceive solar years to be intended than lunar ones. But he had tried solar years, he says, in all manner of ways, and could find no notable events at all to correspond with the dates. On the contrary, when he came to make trial with lunar ones, he found the events answer the prediction with the utmost accuracy. And this he thinks sufficient both to clear up, and also to vindicate the use of so uncommon a mode of computation, at least in a prophecy, where ambiguity is no objection before the time of its accomplishment. *Epist. ad D. J. Pringle*, p. 203, 204. But what is this remarkable coincidence of events, that appears so much to the purpose? Why, having first settled with himself that the terms may possibly be rendered seventy Weeks, and seventy, and sixty two, to were

were never stronger nor more universally prevalent among the Jews, than about the time of our Saviour's birth. Hence the numbers of those, who in Jerusalem are said to have waited at that time for *redemption*, and *the consolation of Israel*<sup>a</sup>; persons far advanced in years too; to one of whom notwithstanding it had been *revealed by the holy ghost, that he should not see death, until he had seen the Lord's Christ*<sup>b</sup>. Hence also the jealousy of Herod lest this great person should supplant him in his kingdom; and hence his bloody attempt to cut him off in his infancy<sup>c</sup>. Hence the flock-

which latter numbers he is pleased by conjecture to subjoin *years*, he then proceeds to calculation, and finds that by the assumption of lunar years not only the sum of the three periods taken together will give a date that falls in with the times of the Jewish war; but that the two former of them terminate, the one in the taking of Jerusalem by Pompey the great, the other in the reduction of Judæa to the condition of a Roman province. Both these events I grant to be memorable ones, and of much importance to the civil constitution of the Jews. But what near or immediate relation have they to the coming of the Messiah, in which lies the distinguishing excellence of the hypothesis above laid down in the text, that both the periods specified have an equal relation to the advent of that great person; with this further advantage also, that the numbers given are not from a mere conjecture or fancy of my own, but are supported by the oldest version extant, exhibiting, for all that we know to the contrary, the approved and ordinary construction put upon the terms in those early times. But I shall pursue this matter no farther, leaving it to such of the learned as may chance to peruse these observations (and I know none more capable than the learned Professor himself) to determine of the comparative probability at least of the two hypotheses in this particular.

<sup>a</sup> Luke ii. 25, 38.

<sup>b</sup> Luke ii. 26.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. ii. 3, 16.



ing of the multitudes to John the Baptist <sup>a</sup>, and their *musings in their hearts* concerning him, *whether he were the Christ, or not* <sup>b</sup>. Nor was it the common people only, whose attention was thus attracted towards him; their very rulers themselves sent the ministers of religion to enquire into his character, who seemed very much disturbed and perplexed, when they heard him declare that he was not the Christ <sup>c</sup>. When our Saviour himself appeared afterwards, the whole nation almost seemed ready to devote themselves to his service, if he would but have taken upon himself the state and character of a temporal prince and deliverer; for such they had fondly conceived their Messiah would be. And when they found themselves disappointed in him, who was indeed the real Messiah, although his kingdom was not of this world, they were many of them ready to follow the fortunes of impostors, by whom they were frequently betrayed to their ruin <sup>d</sup>. These early expectations must be supposed to have some scriptural foundation likewise; for scarce any thing else could have procured them such strong and universal credit. But the time of our Saviour's birth was at too great a distance from that of which Josephus has spoken, being a difference of not less than seventy years, for to admit a supposition that the one could possibly be

<sup>a</sup> Matt. iii. 5. Mark. i. 5.      <sup>b</sup> Luk. iii. 15.      <sup>c</sup> Joh. i. 19, &c.

<sup>d</sup> Acts v. 36, 37. xxi. 38. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. c. 7. §. 6, 10.  
De Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 13. §. 4, 5.

mistaken

mistaken in calculation for the other. What then? Had this scriptural prophecy fixed on both times for the Messiah's appearance? It had done so upon the footing on which I have placed it; but, I think, after no other plan or mode of interpretation whatever.

LET us proceed now to the consideration of the remainder of this verse, where the words, תשוב ונבנתה רחוב וחרוץ ובצוק העתים, are by our translators rendered, *the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times*. To this translation the following objections occur; first, that the verbs תשוב ונבנתה, being both feminine, cannot by the rules of grammar be constructed with the following nouns, which are masculine. But granting that this objection might be got over by making Jerusalem the subject of the verbs, and the nouns *street* and *wall* to be used in apposition; it may next be questioned by what authority the word חרוץ is interpreted to signify *a wall*. In this sense it is certainly used no where else; and, I think, it will be found difficult to account how any such meaning can be deduced from its root, or from any term of affinity with it\*. To this may be added, that after it

\* Dr Prideaux says, that חרוץ ought to be rendered *a ditch*; but then he is for giving a figurative sense to it, as indeed he does to רחוב, *street*, and to the whole verse; which I can never be brought to acquiesce in, whilst a literal construction is admissible. The Professor Michaelis owns himself totally at a loss, and unable to satisfy himself with his own or any other conjectures about the true sense of these words.

had been said, that Jerufalem should be built again, it was scarcely necessary to specify that it should be built with a *street*; for how else could it well be supposed to be built as a city? And lastly, by the *troublous times* it is usual to understand those, in which the walls were repaired under Nehemiah, who had to contend with the insidious practices of Sanballat and his companions\*. But it seems not very likely, that an opposition so weak and inconsiderable, which only served to create an alarm, but had not power to interrupt the progress of the work, could be deemed of consequence enough to be so particularly noticed and predicted. In some of the ancient versions the words רחוב and ררוץ are rendered in a different sense; and in the Greek of the *Seventy* in particular they are expressed by εἰς πλατος και μηκος, *in breadth and length*. But I apprehend that by the alteration of a single point they are both instead of nouns to be considered as verbs of the infinitive mood taken gerundively, and answering to the latin gerunds, *se dilatando et progrediendo*.\* For רחב signifies properly *to be enlarged*; and one of

\* Nehem. Chap. iv. & vi.

\* In one of the MSS. collated at Paris' the latter of these words is read with the preposition ב before it, ובחרוץ, which strengthens the supposition of its being a gerund; and though I do not find that any of the Collations exhibit רחוב with the like prefix, yet the rendering of this word by the LXX with the preposition εἰς before it, as above specified, affords some reason to presume that it might have been so read in some of the more ancient copies.



the primary senses ascribed to the other verb *וַיָּבֵן* is *to move or advance forward*<sup>a</sup>. The whole sentence therefore, setting aside the Hebrew idiom, may be thus rendered; *it* (namely, Jerusalem) *shall be rebuilt, growing still greater and more considerable, even amidst times of distress*. Nor could any description better suit the condition of the Jews and their capital city in general during the period under notice. For after their restoration to their country their affairs were far from being in so prosperous a course, as hath sometimes been imagined; but bating a few years of liberty, which they enjoyed under some of their princes of the Asmonæan race, they were for the rest held in servile subjection to the Persians and other conquering powers, by whom they were frequently oppressed, and their city five times taken and spoiled by the enemy.\* These therefore might surely with reason be reckoned *troublous times*, or *times of distress*; but notwithstanding all these circumstances so unfavorable in appearance, Jerusalem from a mean beginning, repopled

<sup>a</sup> See 2 Sam. v. 24.

\* The city was taken, first, by Ptolemy the son of Lagus, who is said to have carried off 100000 Jews captives, in the year before Christ cccxx. Secondly, by Antiochus Epiphanes in the year before Christ clxx, who then did much mischief; and two years after it was miserably plundered and burnt by his general Apollonius. Pompey the great took it again in the year before Christ lxiii; after this it was taken by Antigonus and the Parthians in the year before Christ xl; and lastly, by Herod in conjunction with Sosius the Roman Commander in the year before Christ xxxvii. See *Usserii Annales* according to the abovementioned dates respectively, with references to Josephus and other historians.

with

with a few impoverished inhabitants just returned from exile, was enabled to hold up its head, and daily to improve in consideration and figure; till it was advanced at length to such a pitch of splendor, magnificence, and strength, as it never had known before, even under the most powerful and independent of its monarchs. Events so very singular and extensively important as these might well deserve to be pointed out to notice beforehand, that when they actually came to pass, the hand of an over-ruling providence might be acknowledged in the disposition and arrangement of them.

FROM henceforward to the end of the chapter the matter, I conceive, will be found wholly to relate to the last period, which is that of a *week*, or *seven years*, commencing with the year of our Lord LXVI, when the Jewish war broke out, which is acknowledged to be Christ's second coming\*, and ending with the final conclusion of that war in the year LXXIII. If in elucidating this part of our subject we shall meet with the same clearness and notoriety of evidence as hath already attended us thus far, may we not flatter ourselves with having attained to at least a more probable and consistent interpretation of this prophecy, than any which has hitherto come to our knowledge?

To proceed then with the 26th verse.

\* Matt. xxiv. 3.

ver. 26. ואחרי השבעים ששים ושנים יכרת משיח  
ואין לו והעיר והקדש ישחית עם נגיד הבא וקצו בשטף  
ועד קץ מלחמה נחרצת שממורת :

*And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

The first words of this verse, which according to the reading of the printed Hebrew text our translators have rendered, *and after threescore and two weeks*, give us a date, from which this latter period is to be reckoned; and as they are evidently designed to mark out precisely the same time as the foregoing, it might be thought sufficient perhaps to justify the substituting of the same numbers again, which have already been settled; especially as there is good reason to doubt of the integrity of the text, both from the various readings that are to be met with, and also from other suspicious circumstances. But for more complete satisfaction I shall consider the matter more distinctly, and endeavour to point out upon what grounds, and by what means, the numbers in both passages may fairly be reduced to perfect harmony and agreement. It has before been observed



served\*, that in the Greek version of the *Seventy* the numerals are exactly alike in both passages; with this difference, that in one place there is no substantive at all, in the other the numerals are preceded by the word καιρους, *times*. In the Greek version of *Aquila* we read, μετα τας επτα εβδομαδας και εξηκοντα δυο, *after the seven weeks and sixty two*; and the same in the Arabic version; so that these two seem to have read the Hebrew text as it stands at present, with the addition of שבע, *seven*, and the ו before ששים, as in the verse preceding. In this case the reading followed by them and by the *Seventy* with respect to the words expressing the numerals will be found to differ nothing at all, only that, by means of a different punctuation, what the one have translated *weeks*, the other have more properly rendered *seventy*. Upon the joint authority therefore of the three versions we may read the text, ואחרי השבעים שבע וששים ושנים, that is, *and after the seven weeks, and threescore and two*; or, *after the seventy seven, and threescore and two*. But it is not from these various readings only that we are led to suspect a corruption in the text; there is also a further proof of it to be drawn from a grammatical defect. For it is observed as a rule in the Hebrew language, that where the substantive and adjective are brought close together in a proposition, if the substantive has the definitive article ה, answering to *THE* with

\* p. 29.

us, prefixed to it, the same must be prefixed to the adjective likewise. Consequently we may not here read *hasbabuim*, *weeks*, because the next word has no such article prefixed to it. But there is a very remarkable reading to be met with in one of the ancient Bodleian Manuscripts of good repute \*; which is, **העתיים**, *times*, inserted immediately after **ואחרי**. This exactly corresponds with the *καιρους*, of the *Seventy*, though there appears no other mark of communication between them; this solves the grammatical difficulty, and determines the next word (which in the Manuscript is not pointed at all) to be *hasbibim*, *seventy*, and not *hasbabuim*, *weeks*; and this reduces the date in this place to a perfect consonancy with the foregoing; and, as *times* is a general term comprehending both *weeks* and *years*, this also supplies the substantive that is wanting to the several numerals that follow. Upon all which accounts there is good reason to conclude, that we have the genuine reading of the text thus restored upon authority, **ואחרי העתיים השבעים**, *שבע וששים ושנים*; *And after the times seventy seven, and threescore and two.*

IN the ambiguity of the verb next succeeding, which may be construed either in an active or passive sense, the foundation of the wrong interpretation, which hath prevailed generally among Christians, seems to be

\* Heb. MS. BODLEIAN catalogued *Huntingdon* No. 12.

laid. For being pointed so as to be read passively, יכרת, (*yikkareth*) and rendered in conjunction with its subject, *Messiah shall be cut off*, what wonder that the death of Christ should come to be considered as the leading object of the prophecy? Hence arose a necessity by some means or other to adapt the time and other circumstances in a manner suitable to this fundamental hypothesis\*; and hence the next words, ואין לו, which in our version are badly rendered, *but not for himself*, are tortured in a variety of ways besides, in order to extort a sense, which the natural construction of them will not admit of. But setting prepossession aside, it is manifest, that the matter all along treated of has been no other than the fate of Jerusalem taken in successive periods, first desolated for a time, then again rebuilt and flourishing, though amidst the vicissitudes of fortune, and now at last devoted to fall into a worse condition than before, and sinking so, as never, at least not for many, very many ages, to rise again. Why then should we not read יכרת משיח actively, and in connection with the following words, ואין לו והעיר והקדש, rendering the whole

\* The method usually followed by the interpreters of this passage has been, first taking it for granted, that the death of the Messiah was undoubtedly here intended, and fixed to take place about the latter end of these weeks, to count back, *inverso ordine*, in order to find a suitable decree for the commencement of them. And this being determined according to fancy, the rest was all accommodated as ingeniously as possible; although sometimes for this purpose (to borrow Professor Michaelis's words) *multis artibus hermeneuticis, magna detorsione, opus fuit.*

together



together according to a very easy and familiar construction, *Messiah shall cut off from belonging to him both the city and the sanctuary*\*? For was not this literally and in fact the case? Heretofore God had taken the Jewish nation under his more immediate care, and had acknowledged a peculiar relation between himself, and *the city and sanctuary that were called by his name*. But they had rejected him whom God had

\* Literally, *Messiah shall cut off, and neither the city nor sanctuary shall be to him, or, shall be his*. In two MSS, one collated at Rome, the other at Erfurt, the ו is wanting before העיר, by which means it's dependence on the preceding words, ואין לו, would appear still more strongly; but there is no defect in the text, as it stands at present. It is surprising however, that Bishop Lloyd, who almost touched the truth (if I may now be allowed to call it so) as it were *summis digitis*, did not by one effort more arrive at the full discovery of it. For he interprets ואין לו to signify the rejection of the Jews from being the people of the Messiah, and is persuaded that all the following passages to the end of the chapter must needs be referred to the destruction of Jerusalem. But the fatal prepossession he was under in common with others respecting the Messiah's death lay as a stumbling block in his way, and turned him aside from a sense altogether complete in itself, easy, natural, and consistent, into one defective and labouring both in matter and form. For, first, after ואין לו it is required to supply יהיה עמו, but from whence is not very easy to say, there being nothing in the context that seems readily to lead to it. Secondly, by עם נגיד הבא we are to understand *the future people of the Prince or Messiah*, that is, the Romans; although these were certainly not Christ's people at the time when they achieved the destruction of the city and sanctuary. And lastly, the whole construction throughout is extremely perplexed, not to say ungrammatical; but particularly so, when we come to refer the affix pronoun in וקצו to its proper antecedent. See Bishop Lloyd's hypothesis explained by Mr Marshall at the beginning of his *Chronological treatise on the 70 weeks of Daniel*, p. 4, 5.

sent

fent to be their *prince* and their *saviour*; and were in turn rejected by him whose authority they had disclaimed, and were totally cast off out of his covenant and protection. Hence the Gospel writers have constantly marked out the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple as the especial end of the Messiah's second coming, and the consequential effects of that power, which he should display to the confusion of his enemies, and the utter abolition of their civil and religious establishment<sup>a</sup>.

Agreeably to the foregoing interpretation the next words, *ישחית עם נניד הכא*, are likewise to be taken together, and we may translate them, *the prince that shall come shall destroy the people*. To this construction no objection can possibly lie within itself, because it is what the words naturally run into of their own accord. To consider it then with respect to the context. By *the prince* it has been usual to understand Titus, the son of Vespasian; and by *the people* the army over which he commanded, and with which he destroyed both the city and temple. But this is having recourse to secondary causes only, instead of looking up to the principal agent and first mover of all, even to him, of whom it was foretold, that *he should send forth his armies to destroy those murderers, and to burn up their city*<sup>b</sup>. In the preceding verse a date, we see, was fixed

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxiv. 3, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxii. 7.

for the coming of one, who is pointed out by the double name of THE MESSIAH THE PRINCE. And if by the first of those titles the same individual person is allowed to be intended here, what necessity can there be, or what reason, to look for another, who should be represented by the second? Besides, the epithet **הבא**, *that shall come*, carries a direct reference to the *coming* before intimated, and was on that very account afterwards made one of the titles of distinction, by which this *Messiah and Prince* came to be characterized and enquired after in succeeding times. *Art thou ο ερχομενος, he that should come, or do we look for another* <sup>a</sup>? But there is likewise an especial fitness in the circumstances of the case, which required that the relation of *prince* and *people* should be particularly noticed, in order to point out the malignity of the crime, and to vindicate the justice of so terrible and rigorous a punishment. Accordingly our Lord himself hath thus marked it in his prophetic parables; in one of which he speaks of himself as of a justly incensed sovereign, bent to chastise the insolence of disloyal citizens, who hated his power, and had revolted from his authority <sup>b</sup>; and in another he styles himself *the Lord of the vineyard*, whose husbandmen had wickedly abused their trust; and whom therefore at his coming he should totally extirpate, and let out his vineyard to

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xi. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Luke xix. 14, 27.

others,



others, from whom he might hope for a more reasonable and grateful return<sup>a</sup>.

THE words which follow next in succession, וְקִצּוֹ בְשֵׁטֶף, *and the end, or rather, the cutting off, thereof* shall be *with a flood*, bear a very notable and convincing testimony to the propriety of the foregoing construction. For on any other ground it is not easy to assign the antecedent, to which the pronoun *thereof* has reference. *The Messiah* it could not be; for how could he be said to be *cut off with a flood*? Nor could it be *the city and sanctuary*; for then the pronoun should have been in the plural, instead of the singular, number. Nor could it be *the city* singly, as including *the sanctuary*; because הָעִיר, *the city*, is feminine, but the pronoun is masculine. Nor, lastly, could it refer to *people*, if by *people* were understood the Roman army; nor to their *Commander*; because neither was he *cut off* himself, nor did his army sustain any remarkable loss. But if by *people* be understood *the Jewish nation*, as we suppose, the syntax of grammar is duly preserved, and the particular means pointed out, by which *the excision*, before spoken of in general terms only, was to be effected, namely, *by the invasion of hostile armies*. For who knows not, that in the language of prophecy it is usual to describe the marching of great armies into the heart of a country by the inundation

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxi. 40, 41. Mark xii. 9. Luke xx. 15, 16.

of mighty waters, which sweeps away all before it, and spreads havoc and devastation over the face of the whole land †.

THE prophecy goes on to describe the process of this calamity in the following words, **וער קץ מלחמה נחרצת שממורת**, where the chief difficulty lies in ascertaining the proper sense of **נחרצת**. Our translators have rendered it *determined*, seemingly in deference to the Vulgate; the authority of which is the rather questionable here, as it varies from its own usage on other similar occasions\*. There appears but little or no ground for ascribing any such sense to the verb **חרץ**; but we have already observed it to have the signification of *moving* or *advancing forwards*, and so have applied it, ver. 25. Hence **חרוץ**, the adjective, comes to signify *active* or *diligent*; and accordingly the passive participle **נחרצת**, when joined with **מלחמה**, *war*, (which is its most obvious construction) may very fairly be understood, *pushed on with activity and vigor*; an epithet never applied to any war more justly than this, where both sides discovered such uncommon ardor and zeal in the prosecution, as if resolved to hasten it forward to the most speedy conclusion. Nor was this a merely casual circumstance, but so ordered by a special disposition of divine providence, as we learn from

† See Isai. viii. 7, 8. xvii. 12. xxviii. 2. lix 19. Jer. xlv. 7, 8. xlvii. 2. Dan. xi. 22.

\* See Isai. x. 22. where **נחרצה** is rendered *abbreviata*.

our Saviour's own declaration, Matt. xxiv. 22. *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened.* From whence it appears, not only that the war was unusually hastened, which indeed is observed by Josephus and other historians \*; but that it was so hastened, in order to put a stop to those very desolations, which could not fail of taking place during the continuance of it; desolations, which Christ describes to be such, as never had been before since the beginning of the world, nor ever should be the like again \*; and which, had they been of longer continuance, must have ended in the utter extinction of every human being in Judea, even of those who were not destined to perish in the general ruin. Let us therefore render the words before recited thus; *And unto the end of a war carried on with rapidity shall be desolations.*

והנביר ברית לרבים שבוע אחד וחצי השבוע ver. 27.  
 ישבית זבח ומנחה ועל כנף שקוצים משמם וער  
 כלה ונחרצה תתך על שומם:

*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate.*

\* See Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. v. cap. 12. §. 1. Tacitus hist. lib. v. 11.

\* Matt. xxiv. 21.



WE are now come to the 27th and last verse; where at the beginning we meet with those two occurrences, which, as we have before seen<sup>a</sup>, occasioned such infinite perplexity, when improperly taken, and were found so hard to reconcile with each other; but when rightly understood, and introduced in their due time, will appear wonderfully clear, consistent, and agreeable to historical truth. Of these the first is comprized in the following terms; *And, or rather, But he shall confirm the covenant, or, make a firm covenant,* (for there is no definitive article before ברית) *with many for one week*; which some of those, who attribute them, as doubtless they ought to be attributed, to the period we are treating of, understand of the firm treaty of peace about that time concluded between Corbulo the Roman general and the Parthians and other neighbouring powers\*, which served greatly to facilitate the progress of the Roman arms in the reduction of Judea. Others again by *many* understand the Roman armies themselves, enlisted under the banners of *the Messiah the prince*, and as it were confederated with him during the course of the war, which lasted just a week or seven years, for the purpose of wreaking a common vengeance upon the Jews, who were alike enemies to both. But though there is a great deal of plausibility in both these opinions, and

<sup>a</sup> p. 9, 10, 11.

\* Tacit. Annal. lib. xv. 29, 30, 31.

the fact in both instances is true, yet we seem not by either of them to have fully reached the true import of the text. For the רבים, or *many*, seem rather to relate to *some of the people* beforementioned<sup>a</sup>, who by particular compact and agreement were to be exempted from sinking under those disasters, which proved so fatal to the rest of their countrymen. And who could these so probably be, as the faithful followers of Christ, who had received a promise of protection from their master's own mouth, and an assurance that *not a hair of their heads should perish*; but that by patient perseverance they should preserve their lives<sup>b</sup>, whilst the unbelievers should be swallowed up *in the days of vengeance*. Nor was the promise ineffectual; for we learn from Josephus, that when Cestius had brought up his army on a sudden before Jerusalem, and had carried on his attack so successfully, that he was well nigh master of the place, and must infallibly have taken it, had he persisted a little longer, whereby he would have had the whole nation together at his mercy, then assembled within the walls at the feast of tabernacles; on a sudden, seized with a panic, he broke up in a most unmilitary manner, and contrary to the expectation of every one; and drew off his troops to a distance, giving those who would a fair opportunity to escape\*. Accordingly, says Josephus, "many of

<sup>a</sup> ver. 26.<sup>b</sup> Luke xxi. 18, 19.

\* Josephus de Bello Jud. Lib. ii. cap. 19.

" the

“the illustrious Jews immediately quitted the city as “a ship that was sinking.” \* But so unaccountable did the Roman General’s conduct appear to that Historian, that he could not help attributing it to the overruling hand of God †, which indeed interposed to make good the promise of his son to his disciples. For, as the ancient Christian writers Eusebius and Epiphanius both relate ‡, the Christians warned by a special revelation (which no doubt was the admonition their Lord had left with them, of which we shall have further occasion to speak presently) took that opportunity which Cestius’s departure afforded them, and fled instantly to the mountains, where they continued in safety till the war was ended. After a little while the city was invested a second time, and so closely hemmed in by the Roman soldiery from without, and guarded by the jealous vigilance of the besieged within, that from thenceforward an escape became matter of exceedingly great hazard and difficulty.

THE other particular before alluded to is, that *in the midst of the week he should cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*; חצי השבוע ישבית זבח ומנחה By the words חצי השבוע, *in the midst, or half, of the week*, it is sufficient if, without exacting a mathematical nicety of division, we understand any time in or

\* Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. ii. cap. 20. §. 1.

† ibid. cap. 19. §. 6.

‡ Euseb. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 5. Epiphan. Hæres. Nazaren. § 7.  
about



about the fourth year of the war; a latitude of expression which any good historian would allow himself, and consequently may be allowed to a prophet likewise, who is an historian before the event. But to admit, as some have done for the sake of an hypothesis \*, that what happened at the very end of a period might be said to have been brought about in *the half*, meaning *the latter half*, of it, is to adopt a stile of language, which, I think, is hardly justifiable upon the principles of common usage †. The proper signification of זֶבַח is a *victim* or *slain beast*, and of מִנְחָה is an offering of fine flour mixed with oil and frankincense, which was called *the meat-offering*; and as this was directed to be added as an appendage to the lambs that were sacrificed morning and evening in the daily service of the sanctuary, both these together may be understood to denote what is known by the name of *the continual sacrifice* or *burnt-offering* ‡. Now the

\* See Page 11. and the Note p. 12.

† To make use of language in this manner seems to me no better than solemn trifling. For at this rate where is the difference between saying that an event should take place in such a week, or in the half of it; since whatever should happen in any part of that week, would certainly happen in the half of it also, meaning either the former or the latter half of it?

‡ Exod. xxix. 38 — 42. Num. xxviii. 3 — 8. Note, that in neither of these places is any mention made of frankincense mixed with the meat-offering; but Lev. ii. 1, 2. it is directed to be added to every meat-offering, in order to be burnt *for a sweet savour unto the Lord*, as the daily meat offering is also said to be.

Jewish war is usually computed to have begun with the taking of Masada in May of the year of our Lord LXVI, and to have ended with the retaking of the same town in April LXXIII, completing the term of seven years; although each date may be extended either way, a little forward or a little backward, without prejudice to historical or prophetic truth. The city of Jerusalem was taken in the beginning of September of the year LXX; and some little time before, Josephus says on the seventeenth day of the month Πανεμος, which according to Suidas answers to the July of the Romans, Titus was informed that the daily sacrifice, for want of persons to attend it, had been discontinued, it is uncertain for how long time before; and that the people in the city were very uneasy on that account\*. So punctually do we find this part of the prophecy also verified in its accomplishment.

THE next words are those, which are manifestly quoted, in part at least, by our Saviour himself, in speaking of the signs which should portend the approaching desolation of Jerusalem. It must be our business to consider, how far the quotation can be brought to agree with the words as they stand, or may fairly be supposed to have stood, in the original text. Our Saviour's words are thus reported by St Matthew; *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of*

\* Joseph. De Bello Jud. lib. vi. cap. 2. §. 1.

desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, εν τοπω αγιω<sup>a</sup>; and by St Mark somewhat differently; *But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, οπου ου δει<sup>b</sup>*. But by St Luke they are evidently paraphrased; *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies; οταν δε ιδητε κυκλουμενην υπο στρατοπεδων την Ιερουσαλημ<sup>c</sup>*. From which difference it is evident, first of all, that the Evangelists did not think it necessary to adhere to the precise words used by our Lord, provided they kept up to the sense of them; and secondly, that by *the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, or where it ought not*, the same is meant as by *Jerusalem compassed with armies*, the armies of the Roman empire, which were an abomination to the Jews on account of their standards, to which a religious worship was paid\*, at the same time that they were used as the immediate instrument of their desolation. Let us now consider the Hebrew text. Some persons seem to be much elated (perhaps more so than there is occasion for) on account of a discovery lately made in the collation of an Hebrew Manuscript in the Royal Library at Paris, which is said to contain a reading more conformable to the words cited by our Saviour, than that which is found in the printed copies. The difference is, that instead of, ועל כנף

<sup>a</sup> ch. xxiv. 15.<sup>b</sup> ch. xiii. 14.<sup>c</sup> ch. xxi. 20.

\* Joseph. De bello Jud. lib. vi. c. 6. §. 1.



ובהיכל יהיה, the Manuscript reads, שקוצים משומם, שיקוץ משומם, which literally translated is, *and in the temple shall be the abomination of desolation, or of the desolator*; and is the same with what is to be met with in the Latin Vulgate, *et erit in templo abominatio desolationis*. But I am afraid there is a much greater reformation of the text made here, than can reasonably be expected, or indeed be approved of. Thus much perhaps we may be induced to give the Manuscript credit for, that it has given the true reading of שיקוץ, *abomination*, in the singular number, instead of שקוצים in the plural; which latter is disclaimed by most of the ancient versions, as well as by the Gospel citations; and besides will scarcely afford a tolerable sense consistent with grammar\*. It is also easy to conceive how a transcriber might be led to add the Mem to the end of שיקוץ from the next word beginning with the same letter, after which the transposition of the *Jod* would be deemed a natural correction. But the difference is so very great between ועל כנף and ובהיכל יהיה, that the one could not possibly be substituted for the other by accident; and supposing there was a design to change ובהיכל יהיה, I think it would puzzle any man to guess why the words ועל כנף

\* If we read שקוצים, it cannot be construed *in regimine* with the following noun, as it should then be שקוצי. Of this our translators seem to have been well aware, who, as well as the *Syriac*, have referred it back to the noun preceding, כנף, but with what propriety as to the sense, is matter of question.

should

should be fixed on to be placed in their stead ; whereas the reason is sufficiently obvious for making the change in the contrary direction. But after all, is it true that the new found reading is more conformable in this particular to our Lord's quotation than the old established one? To me, I must confess, it appears otherwise. Indeed it is far from being clear, that our Saviour cited from the prophet Daniel any more than the two words, which signify, *the abomination of desolation*; for his words are, *When ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet*; whereas if the rest had been a part of the citation, it ought rather to have been expressed thus, *When ye shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, or where it ought not, as spoken of, or foretold, by the prophet Daniel*. But neither do the terms, *holy place, or where it ought not*, necessarily imply the structure or edifice of the temple, but take in the environs of it also, the mountain on which it was built; and even the whole city with its suburbs, on account of its relation to God, was accounted *holy* too, and therefore unfit to be profaned by the approach of any thing so abominable, as were the idols of heathen worship. Nor is it true, that the Roman legions ever did set up their standards in the temple, *בְּהֵיכָל*, that is, within or upon the house or building, till such time as the city was finally taken; whereas the fact alluded to by Christ was manifestly something prior to that event, as a prognostic of it; and doubtless was meant of that  
near

near approach which Cestius made, when he had taken the lower town, and came near enough to attempt setting fire to the outer gate of the temple\*. Then I think it might properly be said, that the *abomination of desolation* was על כנף, upon the border or *outskirt* of both the city and temple; for כנף, which primarily signifies *wing*, is used metaphorically to denote the *border* or *extremity* of any thing, as of a garment, and also of a place or territory. So that the *abomination of desolation being on the border* answers well to *Jerusalem being compassed with armies, standing in the holy place, and where*, in the estimation of a Jew at least, *they certainly ought not*. This therefore I conceive to be the genuine reading, ועל כנף שיקין משמם, and that it ought to be rendered thus; *And on the border* (encompassing and pressing close upon the besieged) *shall be the abomination of desolation.* †

\* Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. ii. cap. 19. §. 5.

† The learned Michaelis (*Epist. ad D. J. Pringle*, p. 206, &c.) seems much to approve of the reading of the Parisian Manuscript, and imagines he has found a confirmation of it in that passage of *Josephus De Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. c. 5. §. 4. where it is said, *that the Jews were forewarned in their oracular writings, that the city and temple should be destroyed, whenever the temple was reduced to a quadrangular form*. He argues, that no other prophecy could be alluded to in these words, than that which we are now examining; because, he says, there is no other but this in the sacred books of the Old Testament, which relates to the taking of the city by the Romans. He infers therefore from hence, that Josephus certainly found in the copies of his time the same reading exactly as that



וְעַד כֹּלָה וְנִחְרָצָה תִּתֵּן עַל שׁוֹמֵם, is now the only one that remains to be eluci-

of the *Parisian* MS. now cited; but that instead of שִׁיקוּץ (shikkutz) *abomination*, he by a different punctuation took it for שִׁיקוּץ (shejjakotz) *qui abscindet*, and applied it to the cutting off of the communication between the temple and the tower *Antonia*, by setting fire to the porticos, which joined the latter on to the former, as a wing running out from the main body of the building; so that when this wing was cut off, the figure of the temple became truly quadrangular. But in objection to this it may be noticed, that the abscission would then be ascribed to the Roman legions, or their general, who are undoubtedly here meant by *the desolator*; whereas it was the work of the Jews themselves, as Josephus expressly relates, *De Bello Jud.* lib. vi. c. 2. §. 9. And even letting this pass, I do not see but that the argument would conclude altogether as strong, if not more so, in favour of the common reading, עַל כִּנֵּף, as of the newly discovered one. For it cannot be denied, that כִּנֵּף may well signify a *Wing* or *Outbuilding*; and supposing Josephus to have read, *the abomination of the desolator shall be עַל כִּנֵּף, upon the wing*, (meaning the tower *Antonia*) *which he shall cut off*, might he not equally have inferred the quadrangular form of the temple from the wing thus said to be cut off from the main body of the building, as if it had been expressed, with somewhat less propriety perhaps, that the main body of the building should be cut off from the wing? Not that I think there is much stress to be laid upon the conjecture either way, how satisfactory soever it may appear to the learned Professor. — But having mentioned the possibility of כִּנֵּף being taken to denote the tower *Antonia*, as the *wing* of the temple, I cannot help submitting to the reader a thought which has suggested itself, not without some appearance of plausibility. It has been observed above, that our Saviour's quotation may well be understood as not necessarily including more of the passage before us than the two words שִׁיקוּץ נִשְׁמָם, *the abomination of desolation*; and, for all that appears to the contrary, our Saviour and the prophet Daniel may have designed the same appearance indeed, but in different places, and  
dated.

dated. And here the chief difficulty will be removed, if we can once ascertain the subject or nominative, which precedes the verb *תהך*, *shall be poured*. This, I am persuaded, is no other than the noun *כלה*, *an utter consumption*, or *full end*; the particle *ער*, which is constructed with it as a preposition in all the ancient versions, being rather to be taken as a mere expletive, or at least adverbially for *omnino*, *penitus*, *even unto*, or *nothing short of*, without affecting the regimen of the noun which follows it. Noldius produces instances of the like usage in Isa. xxxiii. 23. Job iv. 5. xi. 7. to which, I think, may be added 1 Sam. ii. 5. 1 Chro. xii. 40. Job xxv. 5. Hag. ii. 20. and many others. The passage therefore may be thus rendered, *And an utter end, even a speedy one, shall be poured upon the desolated*. Or, without making much alteration in the sense, *וער* may be taken conjunctively for *even until*, as limiting a time for the continuance of *the abomination of desolation* in the situation before-

at different times. What then, if without prejudice to the notion that our Saviour had in view the near approach of the Roman armies under Cestius, we here render the words *ועל כנף שיקץ משמם* literally, *and the abomination of desolation*, that is, the same Roman legions with their idolatrous standards, *shall be upon the wing*; and understand thereby the lodgment made by them upon the tower *Antonia* at the very time, when Titus is said to have had the first intelligence that the daily sacrifices of the temple had ceased a little before; and the final destruction of the city and temple followed soon after? For my part, I can see little other objection to this interpretation, than that the transactions of the siege are here related beforehand with as much order, as they were afterwards by the Historian, who had been himself an eye-witness of the whole.

mentioned ;

mentioned; thus, *and the abomination of desolation shall be upon the border, EVEN UNTIL an utter end, and that a speedy one, shall be poured upon the desolated* \*. As for the word נַחֲרָצָה, its signification has already been determined in the preceding verse, and for the reasons there given we render it *hastened*, or *speedy*; besides that it is so rendered by the Seventy, the Syriac, and the Latin Vulgate, Isai. x. 22. where it occurs joined with כָּלָה, as in the present instance, כָּלָה נַחֲרָצָה, *consummatio abbreviata*, Gr. συντεταμμενον; and even our translators themselves have given the same turn to an expression of a similar form, כָּלָה אֶךְ נִבְחָלָה, *He shall make EVEN A SPEEDY RIDDANCE of all them that dwell in the land*. Zeph. i. 18. Enough has been already observed of the extraordinary haste in which the war was precipitated to a conclusion \*. And as to the final issue of it, we may compare what is here said with our Saviour's prediction, Luke xxi. 24. which history informs us was completely verified in the event. *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gen-*

\* See עַד used in this manner with a future verb, Gen. xxxviii. 11. Prov. vii. 23. Hof. x. 12. It is not clear whether our last English translators of the Bible did not understand עַד in this sense, as may be seen from the pointing with which this sentence is read p. 53. but it is certainly so taken in the old English version of Queen Elizabeth's time, which reads, *even untill the consummation determined shall be poured upon the desolate*.

\* P. 52, 53.



*tiles be fulfilled.* — One thing more I would choose to remark, which is, that a peculiar stress seems to be laid on the last word, שומם, *the desolated*; by which those appear to be marked out, who having been all along harrassed and worn down by the miseries of the war, and especially of the siege, were doomed finally to perish and be cut off at the close of all; in contradistinction seemingly to that part of the nation, who at the beginning of the verse were said to have been under the protection of a special covenant, and thereby exempted from the general ruin. This latter was the case of the inhabitants of the mountainous parts of *Galilee* and *Perea*, who, not having joined in the revolt from the Romans, were therefore safe, together with the better sort of the nation, who had fled thither from the southern parts of *Judea* properly so called \*. This distinction our Saviour also hath most expressly noticed in the following words of his prediction, *Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left* \*.

AND thus have I endeavoured to trace out and explain the true import and meaning of this extraordinary vision; following with impartiality, and, I trust, with due sobriety, the lights that have been held forth to me; some of which being of new discovery may have

\* See p. 56.

\* Matt. xxiv. 40, 41.

been the cause why the matter has hitherto been differently apprehended; but if a proper use shall appear to have been made of these, it may encourage our hopes of further benefit in the illustration of other difficult parts of Scripture, to be derived from those larger communications of the same kind, which we are taught shortly to expect. It may not be amiss to give the translation of the whole prophecy at one view, according to the foregoing amendments.

SEVENTY, SEVENTY YEARS OF REST (or, DESOLATION) HAVE BEEN UPON THY PEOPLE AND UPON THY HOLY CITY, TO CHECK THE REVOLT, AND TO PUT AN END TO SINS, AND TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR INIQUITY, AND TO BRING AGAIN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ANCIENT TIMES, AND TO SEAL (that is, AUTHENTICATE) THE DIVINE ORACLE AND THE PROPHET, AND TO ANOINT (that is, SANCTIFY ANEW) THE MOST HOLY THINGS.

AND THOU SHALT KNOW AND UNDERSTAND, THAT FROM THE GOING FORTH OF A DECREE TO REBUILD JERUSALEM UNTO THE MESSIAH THE PRINCE SHALL BE SEVENTY AND SEVEN WEEKS, AND THREESCORE AND TWO YEARS; IT SHALL BE REBUILT, STILL ENLARGING ITSELF, AND BECOMING MORE AND MORE CONSIDERABLE, EVEN AMIDST TIMES OF DISTRESS.

AND AFTER THE TIMES SEVENTY SEVEN AND THREESCORE AND TWO, MESSIAH SHALL CUT OFF FROM BELONGING TO HIM BOTH THE CITY AND THE SANCTUARY; THE PRINCE THAT SHALL COME SHALL DESTROY THE PEOPLE; AND THE CUTTING OFF THEREOF SHALL BE WITH A FLOOD; (that is, A HOSTILE INVASION) AND UNTO THE END OF A WAR CARRIED ON WITH RAPIDITY SHALL BE DESOLATIONS.

BUT HE SHALL CONFIRM A COVENANT (or MAKE A FIRM COVENANT) WITH MANY FOR ONE WEEK; AND IN THE MIDST OF THE WEEK HE SHALL CAUSE THE SACRIFICE AND MEAT OFFERING TO CEASE; AND THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION SHALL BE UPON THE BORDER; (that is, ENCOMPASSING AND PRESSING CLOSE UPON THE CITY AND THE TEMPLE) AND AN UTTER END, EVEN A SPEEDY ONE, (or, EVEN UNTIL AN UTTER END, AND THAT A SPEEDY ONE) SHALL BE POURED UPON THE DESOLATED.

A most astonishing prediction, in which the future fortunes of a people, carried on and continued through a course of more than six hundred years together, marked with a succession of striking and extraordinary incidents, and at length terminating in a final dissolution,



tion, are described beforehand with such wonderful precision and circumstantiality, that to a person not well versed in the proofs of scripture authenticity it might well appear (what some enemies to revelation have groundlessly charged upon this and other scriptural prophecies besides) to have been invented after the things had happened, which are pretended to be foretold in it! Happily however we are enabled undeniably to evince the contrary; not only because we are provided with abundant evidence of the book, which contains this prophecy, and of the prophecy itself, having been extant long before the times which are therein referred to, and of its having been still in the keeping of those, whose avowed enmity to the Christian cause must have been an effectual bar against any attempt of imposture to favour it; but also because even Christians themselves have not, according to the present supposition at least, been hitherto generally acquainted with the true value of its contents, so as to apply them with all due advantage. Authenticated then as it is, and illustrated, if truly, according to the foregoing explanation, it must be considered as a most strong corroborating testimony of the truth of our holy religion, and of the divine power and authority of its great author. — Some perhaps may be dissatisfied at not finding any longer in this prophecy the proof of that particular article of Christian faith, which has commonly been understood to be witnessed in it. Far, very far am I from wishing  
to

to weaken any part of that evidence, which is afforded us for the confirmation of any of those sacred truths, which are most surely believed among us. But if the doctrine of our Saviour's death for the sins of mankind be not here to be met with in reality, as I am persuaded it is not, who can be justly blamed for acknowledging the truth? Nor do I think the credibility of the doctrine is in the least degree shaken or affected by the want of such an attestation. For if the illustration of this prophecy tends to the confirmation of the gospel truth in general, it tends also to the confirmation of every particular article which that gospel teaches. And I know not what it doth teach, if it doth not teach with the greatest plainness and perspicuity, that *Christ Jesus died for our sins<sup>a</sup>, and not for his own<sup>b</sup>, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God<sup>c</sup>*. This at least I am certain of, that if any one should be so weak and unsettled in the faith, as to remain unconvinced by the express declarations made on this head by our Saviour and his apostles, he would hardly be persuaded by any additional testimony, that could possibly be derived from the words of this prophecy.

<sup>a</sup> Rom. iv. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Gal. i. 4. Heb. i. 3. ix. 28. 1 Pet. ii. 24. <sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb. iv. 15. vii. 26, 27. 1 Pet. ii. 22.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 18.

ONE word or two more let me add, before I conclude, with respect to the purpose and design of revealing this heavenly vision. Some persons have seemed to imagine, and have argued upon the supposition, that the matter of this prophecy must needs be considered as of a favourable kind, and not to contain threats of evil, as we see it does, because it was delivered to Daniel in answer to his prayer, and by way of consolation to him, at the same time that he is declared to be in especial favour with God \*. But I see not the least ground for such a presumption. All, I think, that can reasonably be concluded from its having been granted in consequence of Daniel's prayer, is what I have already inferred at the beginning of this inquiry; namely, that it might fairly be expected to have been in point, or at least not foreign to the matter of the supplication. And upon this footing it was surely a distinguishing mark of God's great favour towards him, that he should be thought worthy to participate of the divine counsels at first hand, of what nature soever those counsels were; and should be employed as an instrument of conveying that knowledge to others. 'The beginning of the vision indeed sounded favourably; but the end was exceedingly harsh and bitter; and undoubtedly must have appeared so to one, who felt for his country so affectionately as the pro-

\* *Michaelis Epist. ad D. J. Pringle*, p. 61, 62.



phet Daniel did. But what then? Must God alter and reverse the order of his decrees, or even suppress and keep out of sight the afflictive part of them, when it was otherwise convenient to make them known, for fear of adding to the sorrows of this good man? Or when do we find him so intemperately lavish of the miraculous interpositions of his providence, as to make such high and important discoveries of his future designs, merely to gratify the curiosity of, or impart some temporary consolation to, an importunate individual, how exemplary or how acceptable soever for his piety? — Again; as little reason is there to suppose that this revelation was given by way of seasonable and friendly warning to the Jewish nation, in prospect of exciting them to repentance. In other places they are earnestly called upon to reform their misdoings, are shewn the necessary consequences of their persisting in wilful disobedience, the judgments and the promises of God are conditionally held forth to them, and no means left untried to revive in their minds a sense of duty, whenever it seemed to decay or lose ought of its proper influence among them. But in Daniel's predictions we see for the most part no condition annexed; all is absolute, and simply declarative, and most certainly to be performed in its season; doubtless because God, who foretold the evils, foresaw at the same time the provocations that would infallibly lead to them. A warning however we may safely conclude was intended, but not to them whose fate was inevitably pronounced,

but

but to others in succeeding ages, to convince them that all this was not the effect of blind chance, but that the counsel of the Almighty had planned it, and his right hand brought it to pass; and to engage them for their own benefit to attend to and consider these dispensations of his providence. *All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*<sup>\*</sup>. Happy if we duly apply the admonition, and suffer it to have its proper effect and influence upon our conduct! The Christian Church hath long since stepped into the place of the Jewish nation, and is become, what that was of old, the peculiar object of God's attention and especial providence. It hath partaken in a very large degree of the bounteous riches of his grace; on some occasions and in some measure it hath also been visited with judgments, and experienced the rod of his afflicting hand. But has it, or to speak less generally, has that reformed part of it established in these kingdoms, and which once groaned under the yoke of worse than Babylonish servitude, from which we are now happily delivered, have we learned wisdom from his corrections, or been influenced to love and obey him as we ought, in return for the blessed privileges of gospel light and liberty so graciously restored to us? If this hath not been the case hitherto, (and too true, I fear, it is, that it hath

\* 1 Cor. x. 11.

not) let us take warning betimes. For if God spared not the objects of his ancient adoption and favour, let us take heed lest he also spare not us. As yet it is hoped that the irrevocable sentence of condemnation is not gone forth against us; and God forbid it ever should! But if we would avoid being held forth in our turn as a spectacle of his national vengeance, let us make haste to avert it by our national repentance. And in this salutary work let us remember it to be the duty of every individual among us to take his separate share, and to labour in the reformation of what is amiss in himself; for by this only can the general reformation be effected. And to this surely we can want no other motive to incline us, than the consideration of the general weal, and the love we each of us feel for our religion and country. But we have this further encouragement in our favour, that however our pious endeavours may turn out with respect to the public, they will in no case be unavailing or lost to ourselves. Even taking the worst that can possibly happen, the providence of God, as is exemplified abundantly in the instance before us, will be ever watchful for the preservation of his faithful servants, and will find a way for them to escape and be happy, even amidst the general conflagration and perdition of the ungodly.

THE END.



## A D D E N D A.

After the last Note at the bottom of page 14. add — The following may serve among many other instances of the repetition of the same word by way of strengthening the emphasis. Exod. xxxiv. 6. Jud. v. 22. Isai. xxxviii. 11, 19. Li. 12. Lvii. 19. Jer. vii. 4. viii. 11. Ezek. xxi. 9, 27, 28. Matt. v. 37. Rev. xiv. 8. Nor is the figure unknown to heathen writers. Thus *Sophocles* in *Ajax* —

ΠΟΛΥΝ ΠΟΛΥΝ δαρον τε με  
κατερχετ' ἀμφὶ Τροίαν  
Χρονον

And *Virgil* . : — *DEUS, DEUS ille, Menalca.*

And *Sallust* in *B. Catil.* — — *En ILLA, ILLA, quam saepe optastis, libertas!* Not to mention instances of the like nature, which abound in our own language — The application of the emphasis in the present case seems designed to express the immutability of God's purpose with respect to the time allotted by him, as for the duration, so also for the removal of those calamities, which the prophet Daniel had taken so much to heart.



